

## JOHN HENRY TANNER—IN MEMORIAM

On Monday, March 11, 1940, the telephone announced, throughout the city of Ithaca, New York, the death of Professor Tanner. He had lived very quietly during the last several years, and the end came peacefully as the fitting close of a long and useful life.

John Henry Tanner was born on March 1, 1861, in Fort Plain, New York, where he spent most of his early life. He taught in the Clinton Liberal Institute from 1883 to 1887, then entered Cornell University, graduating in 1891. He was immediately appointed instructor in mathematics, promoted to an assistant professorship in 1894, but he did not assume this office at once, since he spent the next two years studying at Göttingen, under Klein and Hilbert. The second of these years was considerably interrupted. In 1894, through the efforts of Mr. Tanner, Dr. Ernst Ritter was appointed assistant professor of mathematics at Cornell, and died on the way to Ithaca. Then Mr. Tanner visited many of the German universities in the attempt to find a worthy successor to Ritter; he did not make a final selection. During the years 1897–1903 Tanner served as secretary of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Cornell and served on various committees during most of that period. It was in this interval that he wrote most of his successful textbooks. In 1904 he was promoted to a full professorship, which position he held until 1926, when he retired with the rank of professor emeritus.

In 1905 Tanner was elected to the Council of the American Mathematical Society, in which office he was active in its financial affairs. In 1908 he was elected treasurer of the Society, which office he held until 1920. In addition to the routine duties of the office, he performed valuable service in formulating its financial policy.

In 1920 Professor and Mrs. Tanner established the Tanner Foundation to promote mathematical research and instruction at Cornell with a gift of \$100,000. The income of this sum is to be added to the principal for a considerable period before the sum is to be used for its final purpose.

Tanner was an excellent teacher and was well liked both by associates and students. The Tanners always had a welcome both for university and townspeople and were particularly generous to students and others who needed help of any kind.

VIRGIL SNYDER